

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

This case has been carefully reviewed and analyzed in view of the Office Action dated 30 May 2006. Responsive to that Office Action, Claims 1, 4, 11, 14, 21, 24, 31, and 34 are amended for further prosecution with the other pending Claims. It is believed that with such amendment of Claims, there is a further clarification of their recitations.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 8-10, 11-13, 18-20, 21-23, 28-30, 31-33, and 38-40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Ichikawa reference in view of the Moriya, et al. reference. In setting forth this rejection, the Examiner acknowledged that Ichikawa fails to disclose various features, but cited Moriya, et al. for disclosing a mobile phone and the switching of a touchpad between key and handwriting modes, as well as other features. The Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have accordingly modified Ichikawa's device.

Also in the Office Action, the examiner rejected Claims 7, 17, 27, and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichikawa in view of Moriya, et al., further in view of the Nozaki reference. The Examiner cited Nozaki in this regard for disclosing a backlight for a panel, concluding once more that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have accordingly modified the Ichikawa device to include such feature.

As for Claims 4-6, 14-16, 24-26, and 34-36, the Examiner merely objected to the Claims for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims. Accordingly, each of the Claims 4, 14, 24, and 34 is now amended to independent form, incorporating therein the subject matter of Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 from which they had respectively depended. It is believed, therefore, that Claims 4, 14, 24, and 34, as well as Claims 5-6, 15-16, 25-26, and 35-36 which depend respectively therefrom, are now in allowable form.

Each of the remaining independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 is also now amended to now more clearly recite among its combination of features a panel for touch input on which a mode switch is represented for switching the touchpad's configuration between various selective modes such as a key mode and a handwriting mode. A plurality of regions are "selectively defined on said panel responsive to actuation of said mode switch," as the newly-amended independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 each clarify, with "a plurality of second patterns selectively defined on said plurality of regions" for appropriate operation in the mode selected.

The full combination of these and other features now more clearly recited by Applicants' newly-amended Claims is nowhere disclosed by the cited references. As the Examiner readily acknowledged, the primarily-cited Ichikawa

reference simply discloses a particular touchpad or screen. Nowhere does the reference disclose such features as a plurality of regions and patterns “selectively defined” thereon in accordance with a mode selection, as each of the newly-amended independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 now more clearly recites.

The Moriya, et al. reference which the Examiner cited secondarily for disclosing a touchpad having mode switching features, among other things, actually forms a handheld stylus 20. Although it may be manipulated upon various surfaces, it is this handheld “stylus” which serves as the pointing, or position inputting, device. The reference makes very clear that this stylus device thus provides “a handheld movable part, or module, which inputs to the PDA information about all or some of the six spatial variables of the movable part, namely its [own] orientation about any of three orthogonal axes,” (page 2, paragraph [0010]).

Where the reference describes its use with respect to an imaginary keyboard, Moriya, et al. makes clear that even in such applications, it is the “three-dimensional spatial information” of the stylus itself – relative to a calibrated reference point – that effectuates the keyboard selection, not the actuation of any selectively defined panel of a touchpad. The reference plainly explains for such imaginary keyboard operation, “a one-time calibration – or teaching procedure, programmed into the processor, is required” to preset the stylus configuration (page 2, paragraph [0013]). This teaches against any notion of selective

reconfigurability “responsive to actuation of … [a] mode switch,” let alone “a panel for touch inputting” with a plurality of regions are “selectively defined” thereon “responsive to actuation of said mode switch,” as each of the newly-amended independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 now more clearly recites.

Given such deficient teachings of the Ichikawa and Moriya, et al. references, the disclosures of the secondarily-cited Nozaki reference are found to be quite ineffectual to the present patentability analysis. The reference was cited for its backlighting of an LCD display. Far from remedying the deficiencies of Ichikawa and Moriya, et al., however, Nozaki prescribes and contemplates a touch panel having a fixed set of copier control buttons set thereon.

It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that the cited Ichikawa, Moriya, et al., and Nozaki references, even when considered together, fail to disclose the unique combination of elements now more clearly recited by Applicants’ pending Claims for the purposes and objectives disclosed in the subject Patent Application.

It is now believed that the subject Patent Application has been placed fully in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

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Reply to Office Action dated 30 May 2006

If there are any further charges associated with this filing, the Honorable Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account #18-2011 for such charges.

Respectfully submitted,  
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